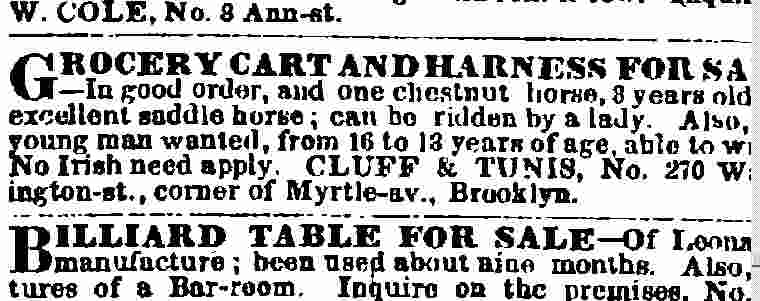
Dear Colleen,   
 I want to let you know that I am doing well however, America is not what I thought it would be. I had herd that it would be a land of opportunity. It is not. I almost wish I was back in Ireland facing the lack of jobs but with you and the rest of our family. I apologize for not having written to you in a long time, but it had been difficult to send a letter since I was in Scotland for such a short time finding a well-paying job quickly. After I had the money I paid for the voyage to America. It was a tough one. There were 900 of us all crowded on to the ship. When I had dreamed the American Dream it didn’t include being surrounded in these horrible conditions with the smell of urine and feces lingering for months. It wasn’t just a quick journey either! It was 3 months of sailing. Or so they say, we couldn’t really tell light from day and even when we could keep track of the days it wasn’t something we really wanted to do. When we finally arrived I set out for some housing. I had about 10 American dollars with me at the time and was ready to rent some housing. The place I decided on was about four dollars per month and I had to share the single room with another family of 8, the O’Leary’s. I quickly got to know the O’Leary’s and I came to here that when they had come here there was another half of their family that got separated from them. It happened so quickly that they didn’t really have much time to react! Anyway, I soon found a job constructing the roads around the city. It isn’t really my favorite thing to do in the world but work was work! Also they say that the Irish are having trouble finding jobs around here so I should be lucky to have this one. I’m making about 75 cents per day of work which lasts about 12 hours. As I create the roads I pass businesses that have signs that say “No Irish Need Apply” which makes me feel bad. I’m creating the roads for the people to get to their jobs but they don’t even want me. I found support with the O’Leary’s but mostly I found support from our local Catholic church. I recognized a couple of people there from our hometown and started to make some new friends. I have been in America for about a month now and although I am finding parts of it difficult I am having a terrific time with my new friends. I hope that you are doing well yourself, and hope that you can come and join me some day… I always have space for you! I miss you and please write back so that I can hear how the rest of the family is doing.

All my love,

Billy McLain



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